

19.2: L11/2

*Don't forget!*  
**labor**

**in the  
Peace Corps**



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## LABOR IN THE PEACE CORPS

The roads were falling apart and so was the heavy equipment used to maintain them. . . .

It started when independence came to Tunisia in 1956 and most of the French mechanics who had kept the machinery clicking left the country. There were still trained Tunisian mechanics, but just not enough to go around.

The new government asked for help and the Peace Corps sent it. Volunteer mechanics brought skills and emphasized the idea that heavy equipment would run better and longer if you maintained it and didn't wait until it broke down.



Today, Tunisia's highway building program is moving. The equipment that makes this possible is serviced by Peace Corps Volunteers—mechanics who are also giving on-the-job training to Tunisians.

Problems such as Tunisia faced with its roads and equipment are being faced in developing countries all over the world.

The needs for men who can build, repair and teach their skills to others are staggering. These countries must have help from Volunteers with all levels of skill—from backyard tinkering to journeymen machinists, mechanics, bricklayers, carpenters, electricians, welders, pipefitters—you name it, they need them.

They need men from the ranks of American labor. They need these trade unionists in three major fields: training workers in industry and machine shops, working and advising in construction, and teaching in vocational schools.

Since the Peace Corps began in 1961, it has been responding to requests from 46 nations. More than 14,000 Americans—including hundreds of trade unionists—have become Volunteers to answer these requests.

These men and women Volunteers have learned new languages and gained new educational and professional opportunities as a result of their service in another land.

And now there is more need than ever before. The Peace Corps has turned increasingly to organized labor to answer these requests. It has sought, and is seeking, ways of allowing the American worker to spend two years overseas helping other peoples without penalizing himself in terms of his job and financial security back home.

## RE-EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS

More than 100 major corporations, and the unions with which they bargain, agreed to grant re-employment and seniority rights to employes who join the Peace Corps. Final negotiations are expected to swell this list to more than 300 leading American industries, and virtually every affiliate of the AFL-CIO.

This close co-operation between Peace Corps and the House of Labor was punctuated recently by a conference, called by President Meany's AFL - CIO/Peace Corps Liaison Committee, whose chairman is Joe Bierre, President of the Communications Workers of America.

The entire business of this conference, and the 40 union representatives who participated, was the implementation of Peace Corps projects overseas and the recruitment of craft and industrial skills.

As Peace Corps representatives canvass Ameri-











can industry, and their contracting unions, to gain re-employment rights for workers who enter Peace Corps service, the committee headed by Mr. Bierne is working to get the Peace Corps message to the American labor movement.

One International Union president observed: "The AFL-CIO was supporting Peace Corps 50 years before the idea was conceived!" And Peace Corps responded, "Yes; and we were still an agency on paper when we first sought active help from the House of Labor."

Although most Peace Corps Volunteers have come from the campuses of colleges and universities, the percentage of skilled craftsmen



recruited from industry is growing and will continue to grow.

Peace Corps is a "hand-tool" people-to-people aid program that offers to developing countries America's most precious asset—the expertise of her craftsmen, her teachers, her farmers, her builders.

The symbol of the AFL-CIO is the clasped hands of brotherhood. Peace Corps interprets this symbol also as hands across the sea, one guiding and teaching, the other learning and developing its own skill, to be passed on in the time-honored tradition of artisan and apprentice.

The AFL-CIO Executive Council has adopted the following endorsement:

*"At the request of 46 emerging nations of Africa, Asia and Latin America, the Peace Corps has sent Volunteers abroad to share their skills, to gain a greater understanding of the world and by word and deed to represent what America really is. During the next year, 10,000 Volunteers will be working overseas.*

*"AFL-CIO has given the Peace Corps its hearty endorsement and support. The Peace Corps has conducted an active recruitment program on college campuses but not among union members, although the demands on the Peace Corps for skilled and semi-skilled workers has been growing. To meet this expanding need, the Peace Corps is stepping up its efforts to recruit skilled and semi-skilled worker Volunteers.*

*"The AFL-CIO Executive Council reaffirms its wholehearted support of the Peace Corps and calls on affiliated unions to cooperate with the Peace Corps in its efforts to enlist the interest of skilled and semi-skilled workers in service overseas."*

## WHAT MAKES A VOLUNTEER?

Who were the Peace Corps mechanics in Tunisia? What did they do before volunteering for overseas service?

A few had been mechanics. But most of them came from other occupations. Some worked in



stores, others on assembly lines in large factories and still others had been students. All of them had something that showed they could handle mechanical problems.

Three months of Peace Corps training turned these people into mechanics. (We also taught them the basics of two new languages: French and Arabic; gave them studies in international and North African affairs and refreshers in U.S. history.)

Similar training programs are turning Americans into skilled technicians who serve in countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

In Malaysia, Volunteers are teaching carpentry, metalworking, masonry, mechanics and machine maintenance in rural trade schools. A similar program is under way in Nigeria.

Throughout Latin America, Peace Corps Volunteers are using construction trades skills to build infirmaries for people who have never seen a doctor, schools for children who have never seen a classroom and conduits for towns that have never known an accessible supply of clean water.

## WHAT SKILLS ARE NEEDED?

auto mechanics	instructors—all levels
air-conditioning repairmen	mechanics—all types
blacksmith	operating engineers
bookbinder	painters
bricklayers	pipefitters
carpenters	plasterers
ceramic workers	plumbers
clerical workers	printers
construction supervisors	roofers
and helpers	radio-TV technicians
diesel mechanics	sheet metal workers
draftsmen and surveyors	steel workers
electricians	stonemasons
electronic technicians	structural iron workers
engineering technicians	textile workers
farm machinery mechanics	vocational teachers—all
heavy equipment	types
mechanics	welders
heavy equipment operators	well drillers

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- You must be a U.S. citizen, at least 18 years old. There is no upper age limit. Good health is a necessary prerequisite but Peace Corps physical standards are flexible.
- Married couples with no dependents under 18 are encouraged to apply. Both must, however, qualify as Volunteers. They will be assigned to the same project.
- You do not have to know a foreign language.
- Don't be deterred because you think you lack necessary skills. Many people tend to underestimate their capabilities.
- Submit a Peace Corps Volunteer application. Submission of an application in no way obligates you. Your final decision will come at the time you are invited to train.
- Take the Peace Corps Placement Test. There is no passing or failing grade. It is a tool to aid the Peace Corps in evaluating your capabilities.

**YOU WILL TRAIN . . .** At an American college or university. Perhaps half of your normal 10 to 12-week training period will be concentrated on the language of the country in which you will serve. Modern laboratory techniques will give you a working fluency in one of 42 different languages, from Amharic to Swahili.

**A NORMAL TOUR . . .** Including training, will last from 24 to 27 months. If you choose, you may extend your service up to one year, or re-enroll for another two years in the same, or a different country.

**YOU WILL BE PAID . . .** An allowance to cover food, clothing, housing and incidentals. Medical care and transportation are provided by Peace Corps. For the duration of your service, you accumulate a readjustment allowance of \$75 monthly. You may allot from this allowance in some instances. The allowance is subject to U.S. taxes only.

**MILITARY OBLIGATION . . .** Is not satisfied by Peace Corps service. However, Volunteers are deferred for the duration of their assignments.

**TO OBTAIN AN APPLICATION . . .** Request one from Peace Corps, Washington, D. C. 20525; from the Peace Corps Liaison Officer on your college or university campus; from your Civil Service Commission Office; or from your local post office.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, WRITE:**

**Peace Corps**  
**Washington, D.C. 20525**

**ATTN: OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS**